



Elder Financial Abuse

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

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Craigslist Scams

I am interested in using Craigslist or another Internet sales website. Are there any dangers?

If you use Craigslist or another website to post items for sale or to seek relationships or employment, beware of possible scams. The problems typically are not with the sites but some of the users.

While the scams vary in ways, essentially most involve the con artist sending you checks and asking you to wire money in return. The checks bounce because they have no funds backing them, and you are out the money you wired.

Craigslist and similar sites are sometimes used as part of what are known as "Sweetheart Scams". Read more at <http://da.lacounty.gov/seniors/financial-fraud/sweetheart-scams>.

Warning Signs

- Someone sends you a check for more than you requested but asks that you wire them back the excess funds or send the excess to a shipper in a different state.
- A person wants to hire you to be their "middle person/receiver" by receiving checks from their United States clients. They direct you to deposit the checks into your account, deduct 10 percent for your commission and wire the balance to them – typically in a different country.

Prevention

- Only deal locally on these sites with people you can meet in person.
- Never wire funds to anyone you deal with on these sites.
- Never give out financial information, such as financial account numbers, Social Security numbers, PayPal information.
- Never rent housing or purchase goods sight-unseen.
- Do not submit to credit or background checks until you have met the potential employer or landlord/real estate agent in person.